

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for preparing at least one isocyanate, comprising:

reacting at least one amine with phosgene in the presence of at least one inert organic solvent in a reactor; and

working up the reaction mixture leaving the reactor,

wherein the at least one solvent is separated off from the at least one isocyanate in an at least a two-stage distillation process in which the at least one solvent is separated off at a pressure of from 0.1 to 15 bar in a first apparatus in the first stage and at from 1 to 900 mbar in a second apparatus in the second stage,

wherein the heat of condensation of [[the]] a solvent vapor from the first apparatus is utilized for vaporization of solvent in the second apparatus.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein distillation columns are used as the first apparatus and the second apparatus for separating off the solvent.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1, wherein the pressure in the first apparatus is from 0.5 to 3 bar.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1, wherein the pressure in the second apparatus is from 50 to 500 mbar.

Claims 5-6 (Canceled).

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The process of claim 1, ~~further comprising a device for utilizing wherein~~ the heat of condensation of the solvent vapor from the first apparatus is utilized to vaporize the solvent of the second apparatus using a device.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1, wherein the at least one inert organic solvent is chlorobenzene, dichlorobenzene, toluene, or a combination of chlorobenzene and dichlorobenzene.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1, wherein the at least one isocyanate is tolylene diisocyanate, methylene-4,4'-di(phenyl isocyanate), methylene-2,4'-di(phenyl isocyanate), methylene-2,2'-di(phenyl isocyanate), polymethylenepolyphenylene polyisocyanate, hexamethylene diisocyanate, isophorone diisocyanate, or a mixture thereof.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 2, wherein the pressure in the first apparatus is from 0.5 to 3 bar.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 2, wherein the pressure in the second apparatus is from 50 to 500 mbar.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 3, wherein the pressure in the second apparatus is from 50 to 500 mbar.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The process of claim 2, ~~further comprising a device for utilizing wherein~~ the heat of condensation of the solvent vapor from the first apparatus is utilized to vaporize the solvent of the second apparatus using a device.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): The process of claim 3, ~~further comprising a device for utilizing wherein~~ the heat of condensation of the solvent vapor from the first apparatus is utilized to vaporize the solvent of the second apparatus using a device.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 7, wherein the device is selected from the group consisting of a flow-through vaporizer, a falling film evaporator, a long-tube evaporator, and a thin film evaporator

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 13, wherein the device is selected from the group consisting of a flow-through vaporizer, a falling film evaporator, a long-tube evaporator, and a thin film evaporator.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 14, wherein the device is selected from the group consisting of a flow-through vaporizer, a falling film evaporator, a long-tube evaporator, and a thin film evaporator.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 2, wherein the at least one inert organic solvent is chlorobenzene, dichlorobenzene, toluene, or a combination of chlorobenzene and dichlorobenzene.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 3, wherein the at least one inert organic solvent is chlorobenzene, dichlorobenzene, toluene, or a combination of chlorobenzene and dichlorobenzene.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 4, wherein the at least one inert organic solvent is chlorobenzene, dichlorobenzene, toluene, or a combination of chlorobenzene and dichlorobenzene.

Claim 21 (Canceled):